

Perspectives

Here's to your health care

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By the time you read this, President Clinton will have already revealed his much-awaited health care agenda. I'll admit I don't know a lot of the details, even though tons have leaked out of Washington over the last few weeks.

But I can't help it. When I see some politician's talking head on T.V., I immediately change channels. One thing I heard, though, and really didn't like, was the administration's emphasis on employer-based health insurance.

What started as a fringe benefit an employer might offer to recruit and retain good employees has evolved into an expectation and, if some of our leaders have their way, a requirement. The math gets



All Over the Map

Tony Key.

pretty simple after that. A business purchases the required coverage for its employees. Add these costs to the mix of social security matching funds, workman's compensation, accident insurance, state and federal taxes, plus a company's basic operating costs, and you get something that very much resembles a financial burden. And we all know where those added costs will come from, don't we? That's right; out of the pockets of the folks who buy or use that business's products or

services - us!

And if a company's costs make the purchase price too high, we move on to some other guy or gal who offers the product or service cheaper. The first company loses business and may have to close its doors. Then the domino effect kicks in. You know the rest.

I applaud the President's efforts and appreciate the challenges he faces. But in this instance, I think he's working at the wrong end of an ornery mule. We'd all be better served if our government, in conjunction with private enterprise, steered its efforts more toward controlling and, dare I say it, even lowering the runaway costs of health care, not just figuring who to hand the bill to.

Do you know what the best medicine for high health costs might be? Moderation!

Moderation in our eating, drinking and smoking. We need to exercise more. We need to get more stress out of our lives. I think they call it preventive medicine.

I want to send a big "Thanks" out to all of you who've given such positive and enthusiastic support to the prospects for a fitness center here in town. Thanks for the words of encouragement (and for a terrific newspaper clipping I received from one reader). I'll relay our interest to our prospective entrepreneur and let you know something in the near future.

Is it just me or has anyone else noticed an increase in the number of unleashed dogs roaming the streets of Hertford lately? Just wondering.

Stop procrastinating

Are you a procrastinator? May this poem help you to stop being one.

Around The Corner
by Henson Towne

Around the corner I've a friend
In this great city that has no end.
Yet days go by and weeks rush on
And before I know it a year is gone.
And I never see my old friend's face.
For life is a terrible and swift race.
He knows I like him just as well
As in the days I rang his bell.
And he rang mine. We were younger then.
And now we are busy, tired men.
Tired with playing a foolish game,
Tired with trying to make a name.
"Tomorrow," I say, "I will call on Jim."
Just to show that I'm thinking of him.
But tomorrow come and tomorrow goes.
Around the corner! Yet miles away.
"Here's a telegram sir." "Jim died today."
And that's what we get and deserve in the end.
Around the corner, a vanished friend.



Bits 'N Pieces
Marian Frierson
Local Columnist

respect, he asked the question, "why have people lost respect?" That is a good question. People once had a lot of respect for themselves, their fellowman, their churches, and their God. Where did the respect go?

My daddy, upon seeing a car coming if he was walking when the car got near enough, he would tip his hat to whoever was in the car. Regardless of whether or not he knew them. Now that was really hard to beat respect. Will someone revive that old time gentle respect? Thanks a lot!

Last year, it was my privilege to visit the Outer Banks three times this year. I just like the scenery, not the beach in particular, because I don't think my feet have been wet at a beach since I was a child.

This year was my first time to visit the peach and apple orchard up in Whiteston. I didn't know it was such a large operation. One should know what's going on in their own county shouldn't they? Well, I've always said a person is never too old to learn something new. I'll just have to tour Perquimans County in its entirety.

For years, I didn't miss a single Six County Fair at the Jaycee's fair ground in Elizabeth City. I would always go and take various items of vegetables, flowers, arts and crafts, and put up exhibits for my homemakers and senior citizens clubs. Nothing remains the same. It was an enjoyable experience, but there is no one to continue the tradition.

Corn crops in some fields must have produced an abundant harvest this year since I have seen so many large truck loads pass. Regardless of who it belongs to, I say "Thank the Lord for the harvest." After all, we are to rejoice with those who rejoice, aren't we?

Maybe if I need some bread, the producers would share. In the Bible, David said, "I have never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed beg for bread." I would like to think that I could be classified in one of those instances.

Did you read that your I.Q. is now judged by how smart you look? I think I like it better the way it was. I might make all zeroes the new way. [Life goes on never-the-less.]

Gem of the day (by Phyllis Diller). It wasn't bad enough that I lost the beauty contest, but I got hit in the mouth by "Miss Congeniality."

Enjoy life each day!



Indian Summer Festival is this weekend - pass it on.

On finding an arrowhead

My stick prodded the soil as my footprints filled the rows. Each year, as soon as the crops have begun to be harvested, I am out in the fields looking for arrowheads and other Indian relics of the past. Once my people walked here, with plows turning the fertile soil in preparation of crops, but my people of even earlier walked these fields as well. In their black hair they wore feathers, and on their feet hand-stitched moccasins as they stalked prey and dug roots while fresh, clean breezes of "Indian summer" merged with tough, tanned skin. Once the arrows that I now prod about this soil for were carried skillfully through the air by their strong bows, sometimes hitting the mark, sometimes missing.

Last week, I found a crystal spear point among the cotton rows. It had been carved from solid white quartz rock, and was one of the most perfect specimens I've found in years. I probably would not have seen it had not the sun been so brightly glinting from its tip that only barely escaped the soil. Once I walked these same rows with a sharp hoe in my hand, but today I come back to them for relaxation and time to think and heal...and just for the rare



Gail Winds
Gail Roberson
Syndicated Columnist

chance of finding one fragment of what used to be.

I look for tangible things I can hold in my hand that are already present in my heart. I look for signs from the past that will point me towards more sensible foot-paths to the future. I look for anything that will give me a firm connection with my ancestry, in search of not just arrowheads, but of a deeper spiritual meaning and understanding to life.

When the Indians ruled America there were no time clocks, no traffic jams, no taxes and no crime problem. People hunted and fished every day, not just on the weekends. There was plenty of food to eat, not poisoned by chemicals, fresh, clear water to drink not polluted by waste, clean air to breathe...then the white man came and thought he could improve things.

A recent rain had not only improved the remaining crops in

the field, but had exposed fragments of pottery here and there along the row I walked. I handled these remnants with great reverence, and soon I had a small basket full. I stood in the autumn breeze, silently remembering the Indian prophet, great Chief Seneca, and his words spoken in 1799 as a warning to all future generations: "There will be a time when the good water we use to cook our food, cook our medicines, and clean our bodies will not be fit to drink...and the waters will turn oily and burn...the cool waters that we use to refresh ourselves will warm and heat up...our misuse of this water will turn it against us and people will suffer and die." I sat on the truck seat and drank from my thermos, realizing the predictions of the great chief had come true.

As I gazed down the long rows surrounded by thick woods, I could hear the call of a crow as I watched a red-tail hawk soar, listened to crickets in the grass, frogs in the swamp and the chattering of many birds. Within yards of where I sat, a huge doe stepped from the woods, sniffed the air and disappeared again into the underbrush. The words of Chief Seattle, recorded as early as 1780, infiltrated my brain: "What is man without

beasts? If all beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man. All things are connected." An I remembered, too, how this great Indian Chief spoke to representatives of our government in the 1700s, warning us, even then, "What is there to life if a man cannot hear the lovely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frog around the pond at night. The whites too, shall pass...perhaps sooner than other tribes. Continue to contaminate your bed and you will one night suffocate in your own waste."

Age-old predictions of the Indians say that a time will come when the children of the white man will come to the doors of their teepees and beg for spiritual guidance to save the world that their fathers and grandfathers had destroyed and left for their legacy. I believe that time has arrived. But will the white man's pride get in the way of his own salvation? I wondered about this, and much more, as I stooped to retrieve an arrowhead from ancient sands that hold for us, these lifesaving answers.

Reflections on being a tax collector

By TONY JORDAN
Perquimans Tax Supervisor

I never thought that I'd be a tax collector. It's not one of those professions that one aspires to be. When asked if I enjoy my job, I usually respond with a resounding yes. That makes some people uneasy. Part of the reason I enjoy it so much is the people of this county. As a native of this county, I feel very comfortable with the honest and down to earth quality of the citizens.

I am also enjoying the challenge of the job. To become an effective tax collector, one must be tough. The job is a little tougher when your goal is to be effective and fair. To think that people may actually like me would seem to be an impossibility.

This ill regard for tax collectors is nothing new. The Bible speaks of Jesus sitting with the "tax collectors and the sinners," hoping to save both. Matthew, the most famous collector, made the transformation from one of these evil creatures to a position

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of honor. I can't help but believe there was some goodness there all along.

I hope that I can make a dent in these perceptions. I believe communication is the key. This monthly column is just part of an initiative of the Perquimans County Tax Department to improve our public relations. Each month we will address a concern of the taxpayer or inform citizens of changes in the tax laws.

The tax office performs two very different tasks. Our county commissioners and the laws of this state require that we "employ all lawful means to collect property taxes." The laws concerning collection are definitive and leave no room for compromise. Assessing property at a fair and uniform value is anything but an exact science. In the months to come, we will discuss various aspects of listing, assessing and collecting property taxes.

I have begun to assess new construction in the county. The improvements made to property in 1993 will be taxed in 1994. Due to the nature of the assessments and the number of parcels to be checked, it will be impossible to schedule appointments.

The assessment process is simple and quick. I will be obtaining the outside measurements of the structure. The quality is then graded on an A to E scale developed during our last revaluation. Finally, I will obtain information about the percentage of completion as of January 1, 1994.

There are no reasons for me to enter a completed structure. The grading system is based on the premise that the quality and design of outside features of a building are indicative of the inside. I am only interested in the inside of the building while under construction. These are standard procedures that assessors use across the state. In no way do I wish to intrude on your pri-

vacancy. Anyone who has visited my home realizes that I cherish it and will respect that right of others. If there are any questions you may have on the subject please contact me as soon as possible.

There may be other information that I will need to get from the owner. This can usually be handled over the telephone. This process can be a very positive experience for both of us. If you have made improvements to your property in the past year, I look forward to talking to you.

If there are questions that you would like for us to address, please contact me at the tax office. As a county tax official, I believe it is just as important that we attempt to educate citizens on tax laws as it is to enforce them.

Letters

Dear Editor:

We would like to express our thanks to the staff, students, and community for the warm reception and support given to the Japanese exchange teachers during their recent visit to Perquimans County. The experience has been one that will be forever remembered by many of those involved.

This educational opportunity has taught us many things about ourselves as well as the Japanese. The kindness and graciousness of our Japanese guests proved that even though we may live in very different cultures, we share many similarities as members of one world community.

We would like to especially thank Dr. Hepler for his role in initiating this wonderful project, the Board of Education for their support, Mr. Tice and Mrs. Winslow for their hospitality and assistance during the week, the

Hertford Grammar School faculty for the enthusiasm shown as the Japanese teachers visited their classrooms and taught lessons and finally to the HGS students for their sincere interest, acceptance, and affection toward our guests.

If there was any one thing that our Japanese guests have said that they will never forget it would have to be the abundance of kindness and love shown them by the people of Perquimans County. We are proud to have been a part of such a successful project and to be part of such a special community.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Anstok
Linda Long
Hollis Williams
Host teachers at HGS for the Japanese Teacher Project, Hertford Grammar School.